DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 478 988 TM 035 133

AUTHOR	Pass, Susan
TITLE	A Biographic Comparison Tracing the Similarities in the Lives of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky.
PUB DATE	2003-04-00
NOTE	15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, April 21-25, 2003).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Biographies; Child Development; *Child Psychology; Classroom Techniques; *Educational Theories; *Life Events; Psychologists; Psychology
IDENTIFIERS	*Piaget (Jean); *Vygotsky (Lev S)

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on similarities in the lives of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky to enlighten study of their pedagogies and to provide some information for current classroom techniques. Neither man had a great deal to say about his early life, although Piaget published an autobiography. A number of primary sources were used to construct the timeline that shows similarities in the lives of these two theorists. The environments in which they grew up and lived impelled them to bring to their research efforts a personal background that gave birth to their research and influenced its scope and perspective. The timeline traces the course of both men's lives from birth to death, marking the publication of many of their pedagogical works. (Contains 15 references.) (SLD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 478 988

A Biographic Comparison Tracing the Similarities in the lives of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky

By Susan Pass

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. Pass

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

TM035133

This paper is prepared for the:
Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association
Chicago, IL - April 2003

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

AERA: Similarities in the Lives of Piaget and Vygotsky
Susan Pass, Ed.D

The pedagogical legacies of both Piaget and Vygotsky remain to be rediscovered in the light of their similarities, pondered, and applied anew for the suitable education of America's youth in the 21st century. Both Piaget and Vygotsky wrote pedagogues that evolved from environments both personal and societal. These events drew forth both men's most deeply ingrained attitudes about their own identities and their most strongly held values and beliefs about personal conduct and education.

To explore this thesis, history will serve as a tool functioning toward greater understanding of the major ideas contained in both cultural-historical theory and genetic epistemology as they apply to American education. Since no comparative biographical study has yet been done on both men, scholars have missed the significance of adversity in both Piaget's and Vygotsky's lives. Yet, this determinant has an important message for either students suffering from adversity or teachers attempting to help them.

Educational philosophies become more vivid in a historical study. This focus on the similarities in the lives of both men can offer a unique opportunity to enlighten scholars on the personal origins of their ideas, provide information for present classroom techniques, and offer predictions for future pedagogical trends. Methodology can eliminate most problems, but not all, in historical work.

Bias is very difficult to completely eliminate. For example, the facts themselves might be biased (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 799). Because those writing on Vygotsky could not reveal completely all that they honestly knew for fear of harm from a Communist government, published information on Vygotsky may be biased. Because this work must deal with published, public information, some biographical facts might not be

included. Furthermore, earlier information on Vygotsky was destroyed when the Germans destroyed his hometown, Gomel, during World War II.

In addition, information on Piaget also appears to be biased in that much of it views him in a positive way. His father was prominent enough to protect him through young adulthood. Thus, reporting that Piaget was in the mountains at tubercular sanitariums covered up two hospitalizations for mental anxiety. Piaget himself contributed to the information available though five autobiographies that served to not only explain his life but also commend himself to history. The Swiss also laud Piaget as a "favorite son" and have not rushed to harm his record.

Although Vygotsky authored or co-authored six books and 180 papers before he died at the age of 37 in 1934, in none of them did he discuss personal matters. Instead, his published works included only his pedagogical ideas and the research proving those ideas correct. Additionally, Vygotsky shared few of his pedagogical ideas or opinions with members of his family or with his friends. Perhaps this apparent secrecy was because, during the time of Stalin's repression, Vygotsky might have wanted to protect his family and friends. While purges were endemic, the less Vygotsky's loved ones knew about ideas which Stalin opposed, the safer it was for them. In any case, the focus of all of Vygotsky's published works seemed to be purely professional.

Of the few biographies published on Vygotsky, only one discussed how Vygotsky said his personal life impacted his ideas. Even there, the lone comment that Vygotsky did make was on the origin of only one idea. Although Vygotsky's parents created zones of proximal development for their children and Vygotsky later created them for Gomel, Vygotsky credited the idea for the term "zone of proximal development" or ZPD to the

American Dorothea McCarthy (Kozyurev & Turko, 1935). McCarthy, however, gave only the term. It was Vygotsky who created the concept. Nevertheless, Semen Dobkin, Vygotsky's childhood friend; A.N. Leont'ev; a longtime colleague; and Gita Vygodskaya, his eldest daughter, did provide some information.

She remembered her father as a very busy man who always made time for his children and shared his crowded study with them. At the end of the Cold War, Vygotsky's eldest daughter wrote a paper about her father that reported nothing on what motivated him to create cultural-historical theory. She also opened up a closet in her Moscow apartment to westerners that housed her father's personal papers. There was little personal information in her father's papers, so searching for other sources on Vygotsky's life was one of the challenges of this work.

In contrast, there are four biographies and four autobiographies on the longer-living Piaget. Jean Piaget lived until 1980 and was a prolific author writing over 50 books, 180 major studies, 500 papers, 37 volumes in the series Etudes d'Epistemologie Genetique, and published, brief autobiographies. He wrote a short autobiography in 1952, A History of Psychology in Autobiography, which gave some personal information on his understanding of how he conceived his ideas. Two other short autobiographies were to follow, but they were mainly restatements of the first.

Then, in 1976, a more definitive autobiography was published in Revue Europeenne des Sciences Sociales that expanded upon his motivation for creating genetic epistemology. Piaget also provided material for Christine Nasso, who authored a brief biography on him in Contemporary Authors in 1969. Additionally, Piaget published two works refuting biographers whose interpretations on the origins of his pedagogical ideas

with which he disagreed. Outside of these publications, there is little information available as to how Piaget conceived his ideas and no work that encompasses the origins of more than a few of his pedagogical ideas.

Even in his autobiography, Piaget was not prolific in this regard. This silence could have been due to modesty, assuming that he believed the world was more interested in his ideas than in him, or perhaps, deep down, Piaget really loved his parents and wanted to protect their memory. Despite this, enough primary and secondary facts were obtainable through on-line retrieval over the World Wide Web and through personal e-mail correspondences with sources in America, Russia, Switzerland, England, and New Zealand to provide sufficient information for this work.

In summation, there were sufficient primary and secondary sources to conduct this study. This study is based on the belief that more than just a researcher conducting inquires on emerging hard facts on a whim creates theory. "No one creates in a vacuum" (Bruner, 1967, p. 3). Vygotsky lived in a milieu of state-controlled ideas upon intellectual thought while Piaget's work reflected the intellectual environment of a free society. These different environments impelled both Vygotsky and Piaget to bring to their research efforts a personal background that not only gave birth to their research but also influenced its scope and perspective.

To easily observe the similarities in the lives of both men, the reader is asked to look at the attached timeline.

References

Dobkin, S. (1982). Ages and days. In. K. Levitin. One is not born a personality. Moscow: Progress, 23-38.

Bruner, J. (1967). Contemporary approaches to cognition. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Gall, M., Borg, W., & Gall, J. (1996). Educational research: An introduction. White Plains, NY: Longman Publishers.p. 799.

Kozyrev, A., & Turko, P. (1935). Pedagogicheskaja shkola. professor L. Vygotskogo.Vyshaja Shkola, 2, 44-57.

Leontiev, A.N. (1975). Djatel'nost' soznanie lichnost. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoh Literatury.

Nasso, C. (Ed.).(1969) Jean Piaget. Contemporary Authors, 21 & 24, Detroit, MI: Gale Research.

Piaget, J. (1952). Jean Piaget. In Boring, Ed., Langfeld, H., Werner, H., & Yerkes, R. (Eds.). A History of Psychology in Autobiography, IV, Worcester, MA.: Clark University Press.

Piaget, J. (1959). An outline of intellectual autobiography. Insights and Illusions of Philosophy. Geneva, Switzerland: University of Geneva Press.

Piaget J. (1966 b) Autobiographie. Cahiers Vilfredo Pareto (Revue europeene des sciences sociales) 4:129-159.

Piaget, J. (1976). Autobiographie. Cahiers Vilfredo Pareto (Revue europeenne des sciences sociales) 14:1-43.

Piaget, J. (1980). Conversations with Jean Piaget. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

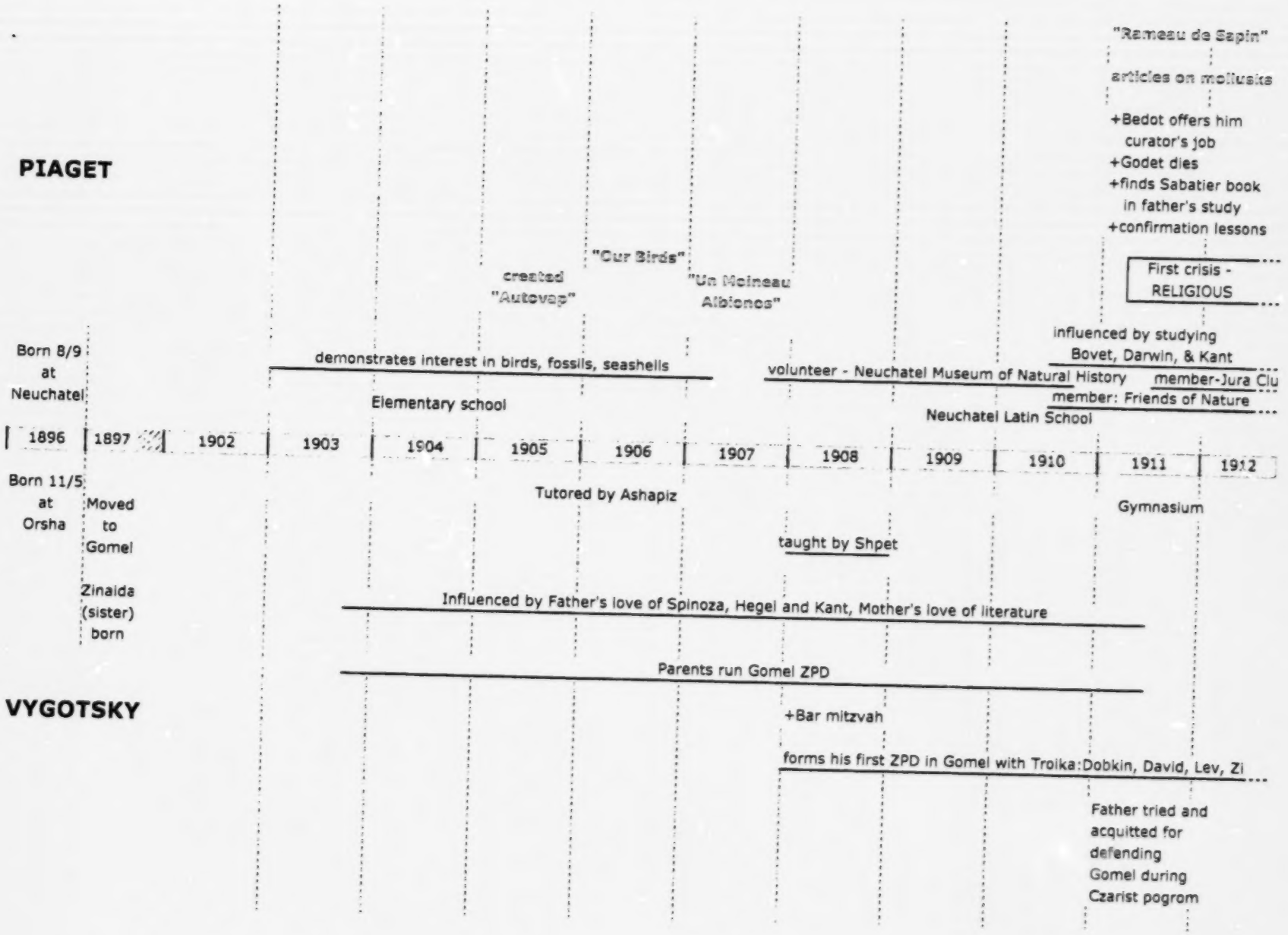
Vogodskaya, G. & Lifanova, T.M. (1984). Lev Semenovich Vygotsky. In Vsesojuznaja Konferencija. Erevan, USSR: Izdatel'stvo Erevanskogo Universiteta. II: 111-115.

Vygodskaya, G. (1984). personal communication. In G. Blanck The man and his cause. Moll, L. (Ed.) Vygotsky and education. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

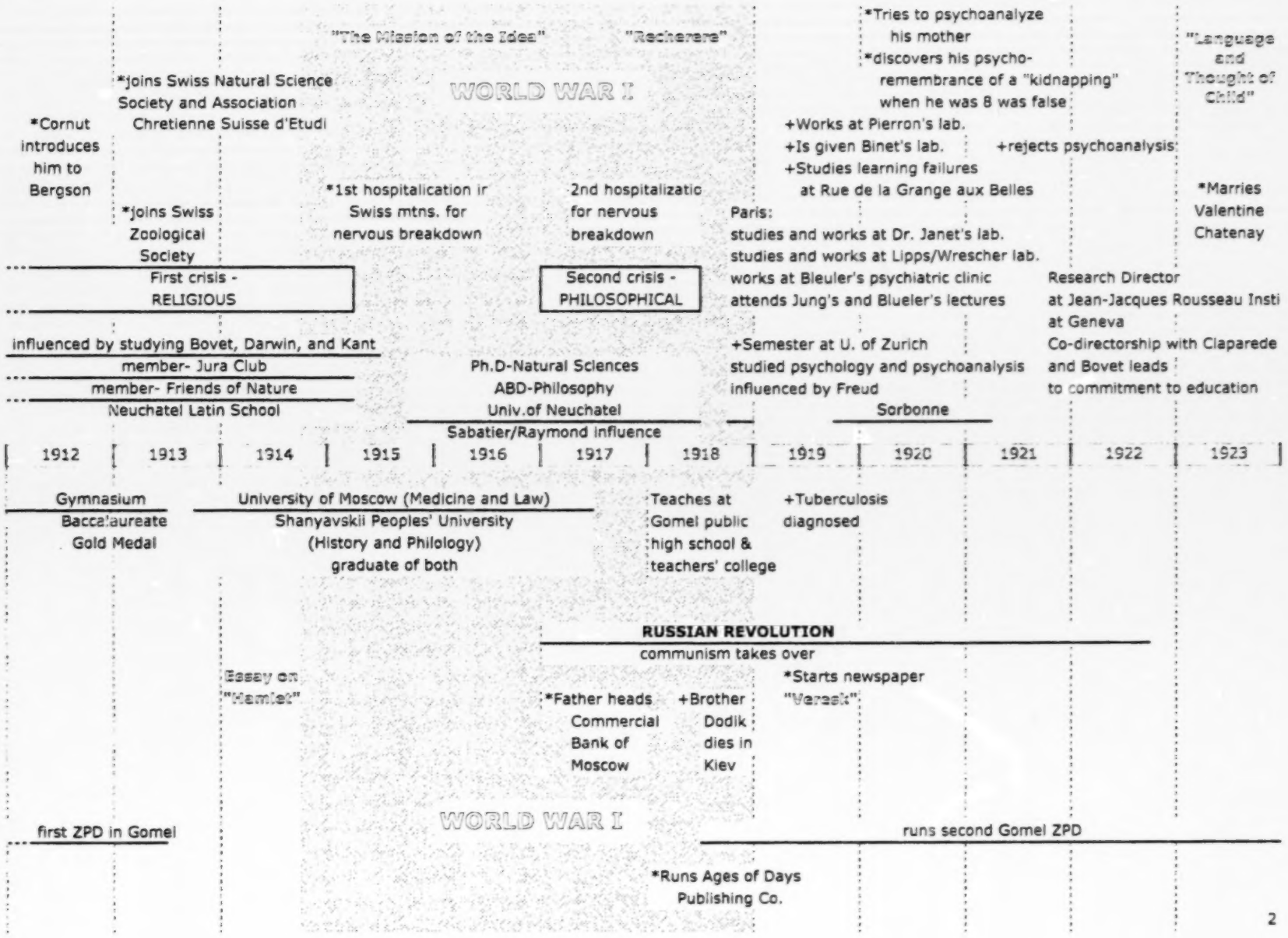
Vygodskaya, G. (1989). personal comunication. In van der Veer & Valsiner. Understanding Vygotsky. Oxford: Blackwell.

Vygodskaya, G. (January,1994/September 1996). Remembering father. Paper delivered to Commemorative seminar for Lev Vygotsky and redelivered at second conference for socio-cultural research.Moscow/Geneva: abstracts/resumes

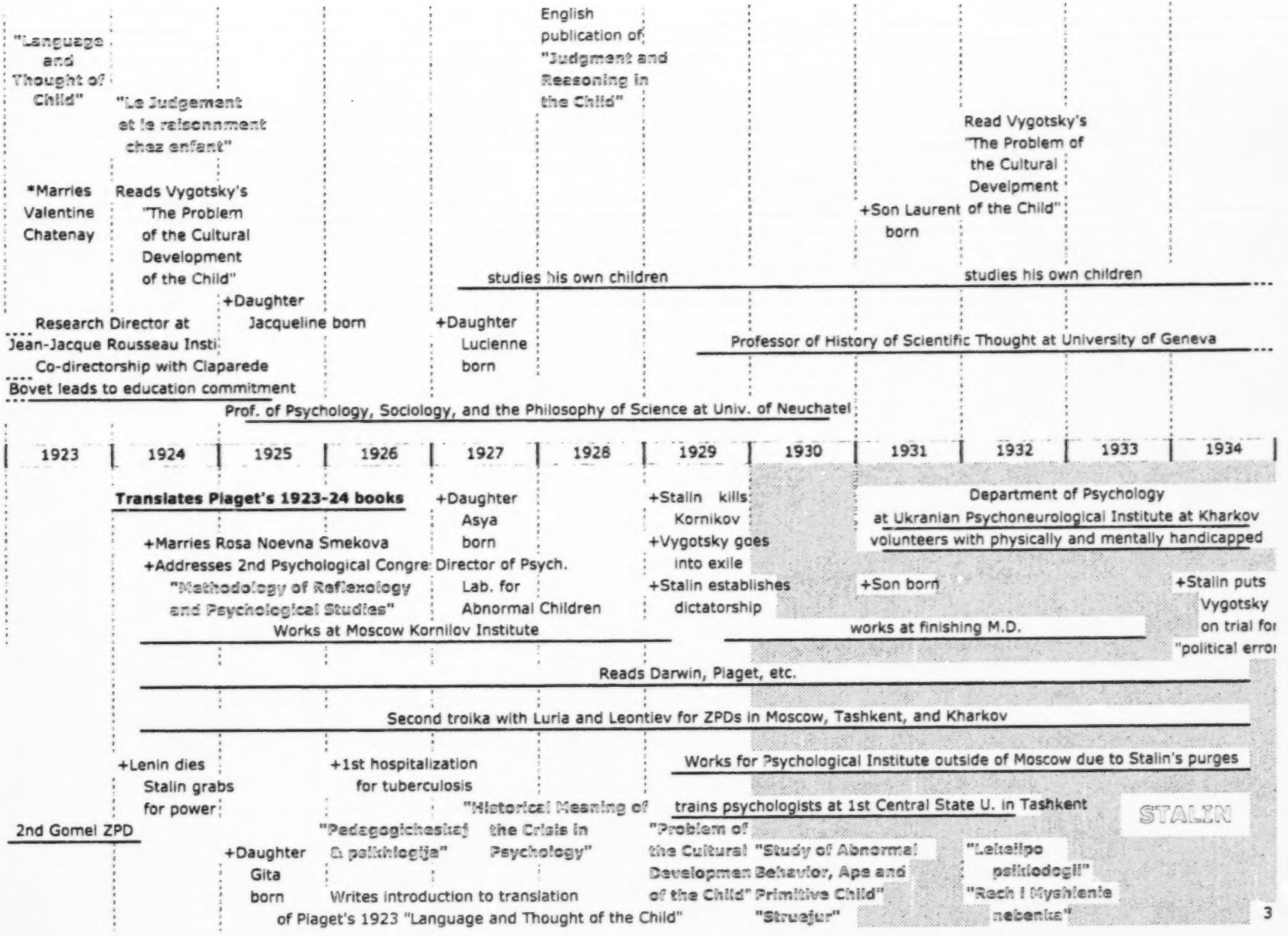
Vygodskaya, G. & Lifanova, T. (1996). Lev Semenovich Vygotsky. Moscow: Smysl.



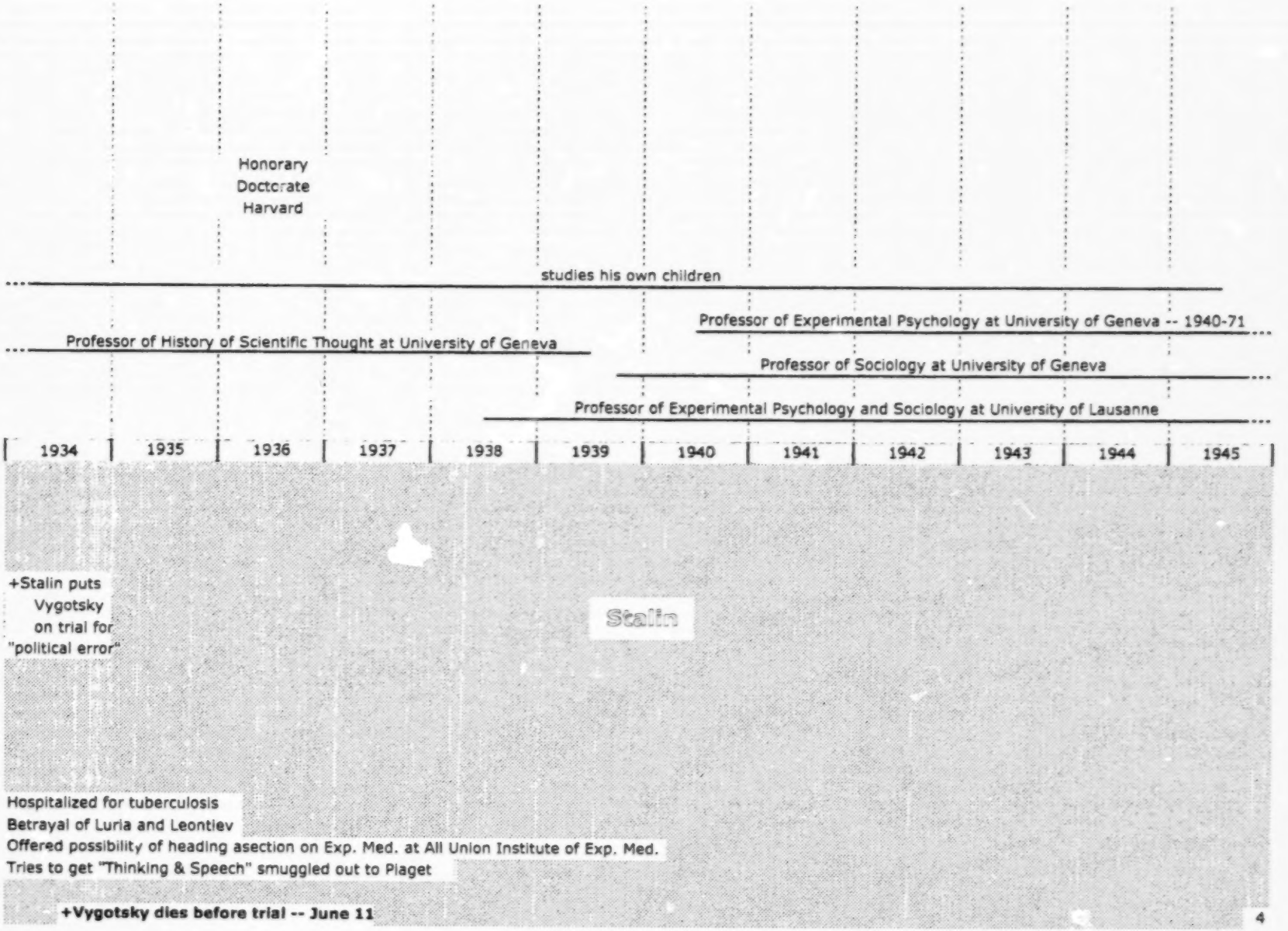
BEST COPY AVAILABLE



BEST COPY AVAILABLE


"Language and Thought of Child"
"Le Judgement et le raisonnment chez enfant"
English publication of "Judgment and Reasoning in the Child"
Read Vygotsky's "The Problem of the Cultural Develpment of the Child"
*Marries Valentine Chatenay
Reads Vygotsky's "The Problem of the Cultural Development of the Child"
+Son Laurent born
studies his own children
studies his own children
+Daughter Jacqueline born
+Daughter Lucienne born
Research Director at Jean-Jacque Rousseau Insti
Co-directorship with Claparede
Bovet leads to education commitment
Professor of History of Scientific Thought at University of Geneva
Prof. of Psychology, Sociology, and the Philosophy of Science at Univ. of Neuchatel
1923
1924
1925
1926
1927
1928
1929
1930
1931
1932
1933
1934
Translates Piaget's 1923-24 books
+Daughter Asya born
+Stalin kills Kornikov
+Vygotsky goes into exile
+Stalin establishes dictatorship
Department of Psychology at Ukranian Psychoneurological Institute at Kharkov
volunteers with physically and mentally handicapped
+Marries Rosa Noevna Smekova
+Addresses 2nd Psychological Congre "Methodology of Reflexology and Psychological Studies"
Director of Psych. Lab. for Abnormal Children
+Son born
+Stalin puts Vygotsky on trial for "political erro
Works at Moscow Kornilov Institute
works at finishing M.D.
Reads Darwin, Piaget, etc.
Second troika with Luria and Leontiev for ZPDs in Moscow, Tashkent, and Kharkov
+Lenin dies Stalin grabs for power
+1st hospitalization for tuberculosis
Works for Psychological Institute outside of Moscow due to Stalin's purges
"Historical Meaning of the Crisis in Psychology"
trains psychologists at 1st Central State U. in Tashkent
STALIN
2nd Gomel ZPD
"Pedagogicheskaj psikhologija"
"Problem of the Cultural Development of the Child"
"Study of Abnormal Behavior, Ape and Primitive Child"
"Leitelpo psiklodogii"
+Daughter Gita born
Writes introduction to translation of Piaget's 1923 "Language and Thought of the Child"
"Struejur"
"Rech I Myshlenie nebenka"
3

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"Traite de Logique"

"Introduction a la espitemologie genetique"

"Plays, Dreams, & Imitation in Childhood"

"Origine of Intelligence in the Child"

"Child's Conception of Number"

"Construction of Reality in the Child"

Honory Doctorate U. of Brussels

Professor Honoris Causa U. of Brazil

Member Executive Council UNESCO

+Stalin dies

(Genetic Epistemology)

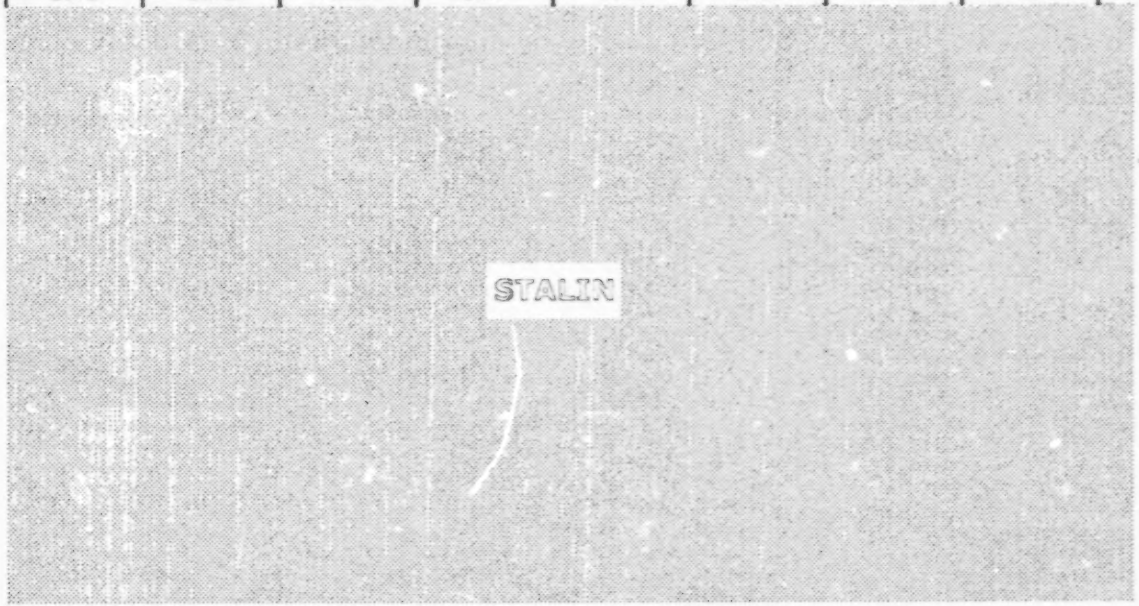
Professor of Experimental Psychology at University of Geneva -- 1940-71

Professor of Sociology at University of Geneva

Professor of Genetic Psychology at Sorbonne -- 1952-63

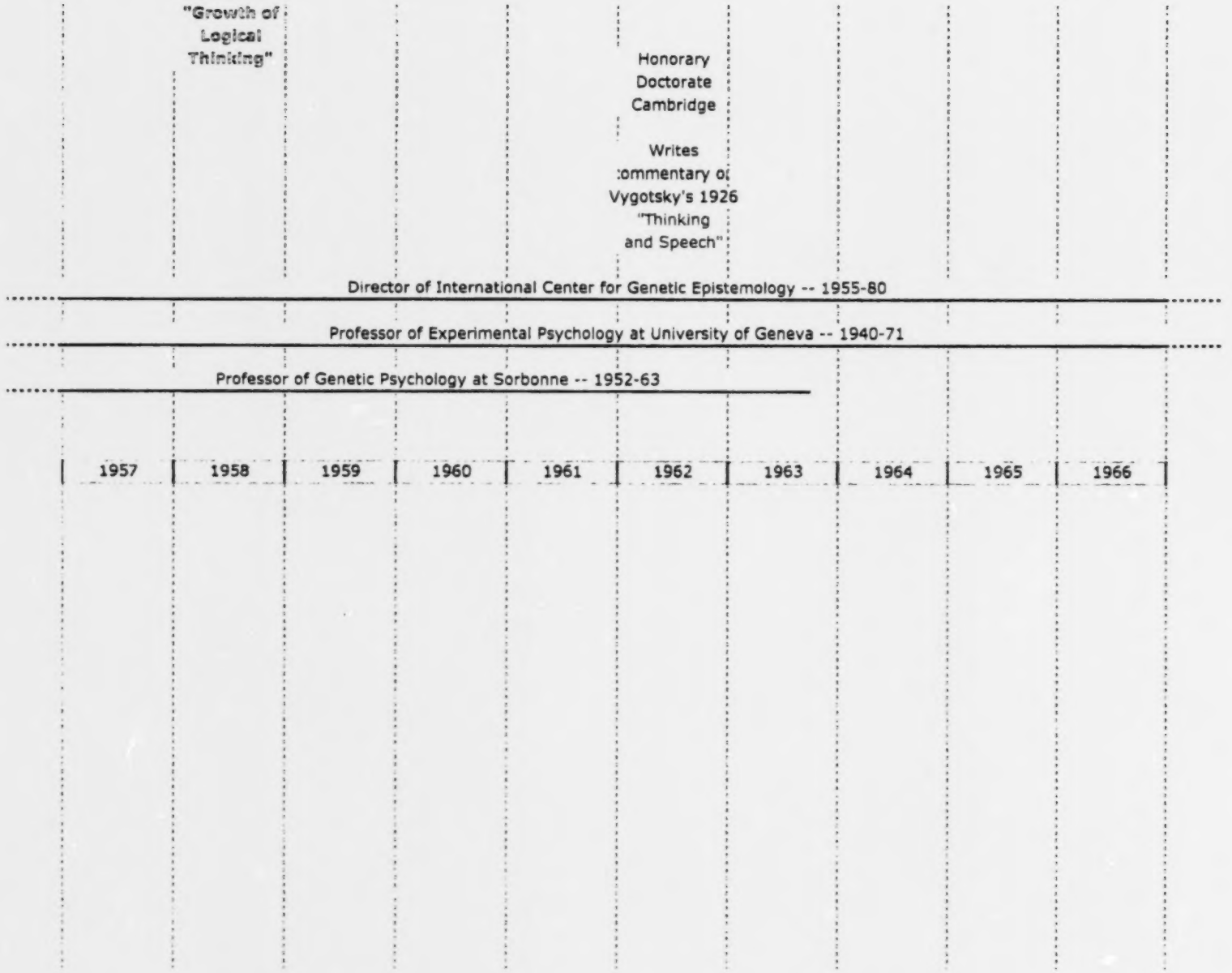
Professor of Experimental Psychology and Sociology at University of Lausanne

1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956

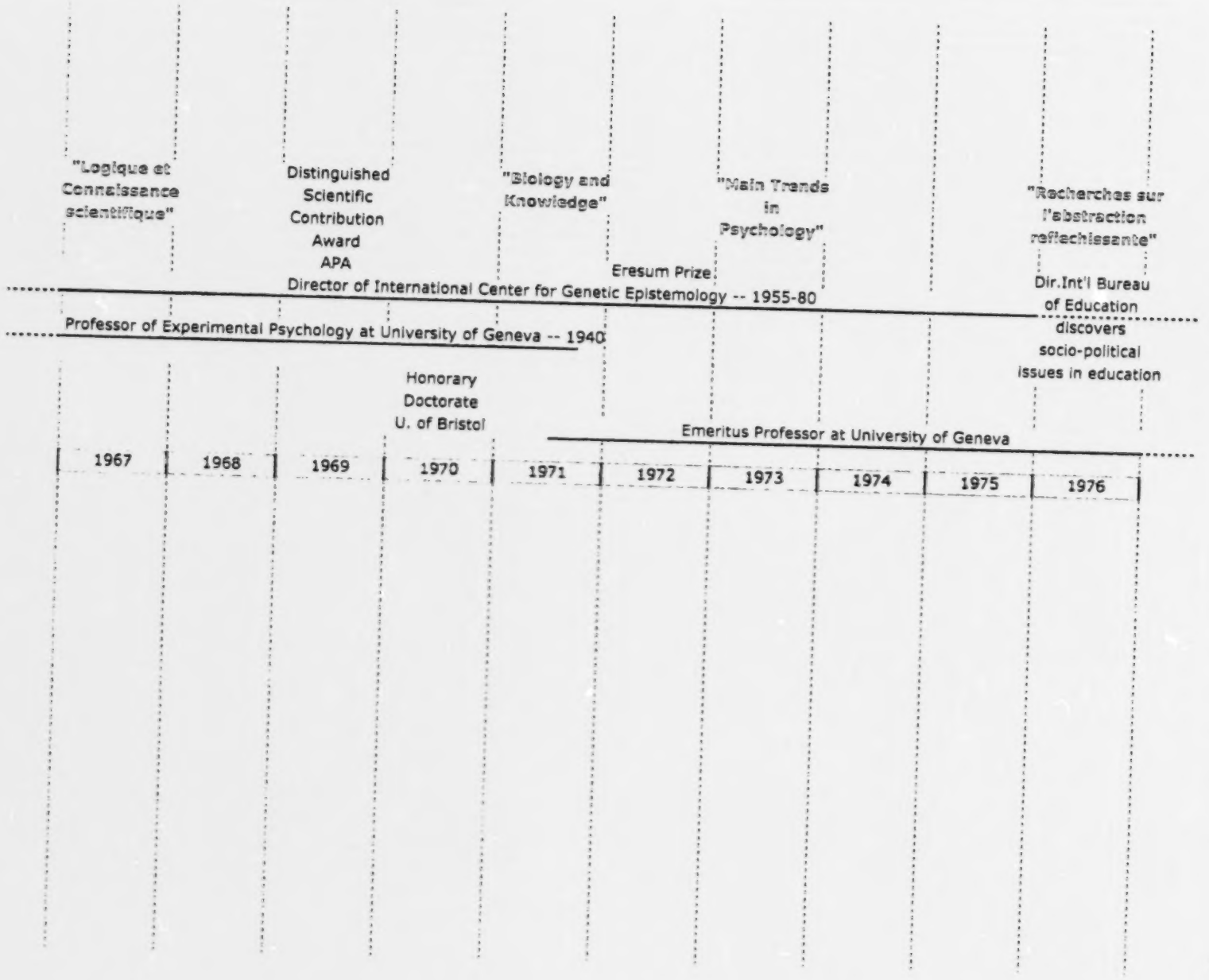


+Stalin dies

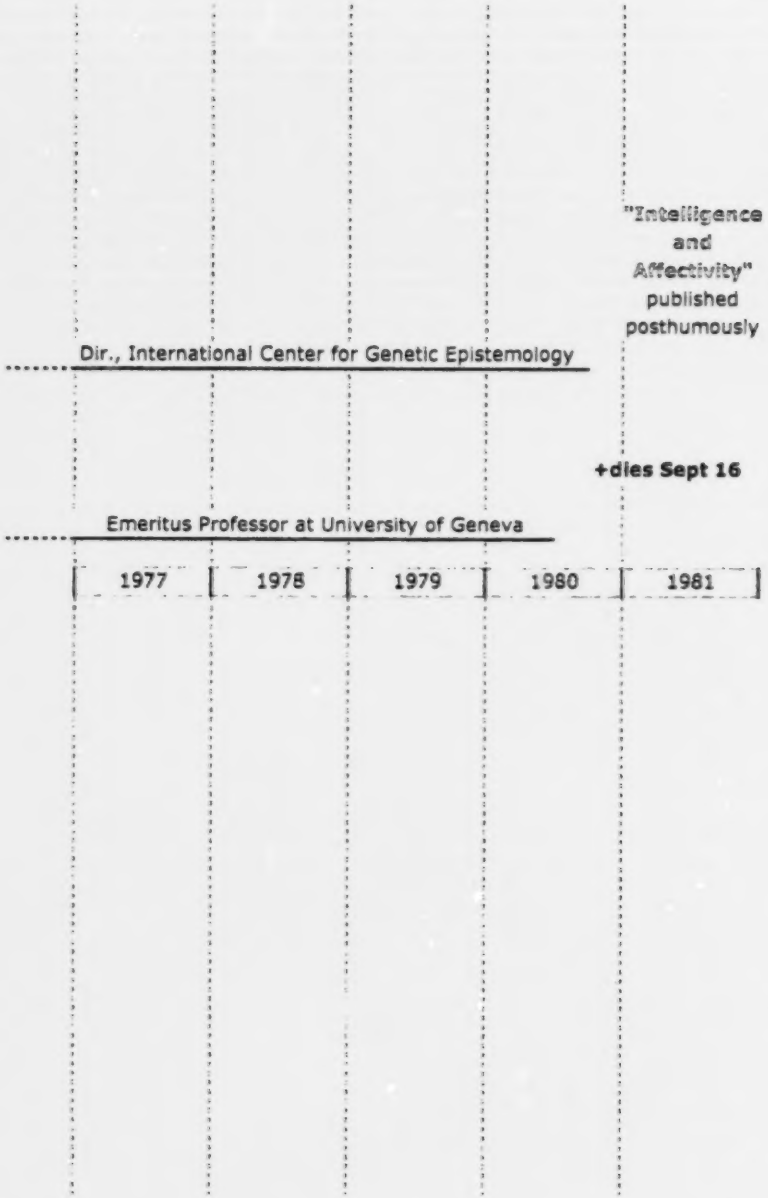
12 BEST COPY AVAILABLE



BEST COPY AVAILABLE



BEST COPY AVAILABLE



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC Educational Resources Information Center

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

TM035133

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: 1) Jean Piaget + Lev Vygotsky: A Biographical Comparison Tracing The Origin of Their Ideas
2) Jean Piaget + Lev Vygotsky: A Biographical Comparison of Similarities In Their Lives

Author(s): Dr Susan Pass

Corporate Source: 1) AERA presentation 2) " "

Publication Date: April 22, 2003 April 2001

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, please

Signature: Susan Pass	Printed Name/Position/Title: Susan Pass
Organization/Address: Clemson University, 405 Tillman Hall, P.O. Box 340708, Clemson, SC 29634-0710	Telephone: 864-656-5131 FAX: 864-656-1322
	E-Mail Address: spass@clemson.edu Date: 7/1/03

(Over)

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, *or*, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
1129 SHRIVER LAB
COLLEGE PARK, MD 20742-5701
ATTN: ACQUISITIONS

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
4483-A Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706

Telephone: 301-552-4200
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-552-4700
e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov
WWW: http://ericfacility.org

EFF-088 (Rev. 2/2001)